1:Dobrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
814 Abipon 814

CHAPTER X.

CONJECTURES WHY THE ABIPONES TAKE THE EVIL SPIRIT FOR THEIR GRANDFATHER, AND THE PLEIADES FOR THE REPRESENTATION OF HIM.

776 WHEN you read that the Abipones take the devil for their grandfather, you may laugh with me at their folly, and behold their madness with pity and wonder, but, if you be wise, let all this be done in moderation, for still grosser errors have been entertained amongst many nations civilized by laws and arts both human
600 and divine. If you do but look into history sacred or profane, you will allow that there is scarce any thing to which divine honours have not formerly been paid. Such madness and folly in many polished nations should so exhaust our indignation and wonder as to make us judge mildly of the savage Abipones, educated amongst wild beasts, and unacquainted with letters, if they simply dignify the evil spirit with the title of their grandfather, without giving him the name or honours of a divinity.
[114] During a seven-years' residence amongst the savages, I never discovered any thing of that nature. If secretly or in our absence they did
781 any thing which a divine would condemn, I

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1780) 1822
S14 Abipon S14
CHACO INDIANS SK4
Araucanians SE10
Araucanians SK4

Ab 781

think it proceeded from no religious inclination towards the evil spirit, but only from fear of him, and from the compulsion used by the jugglers; so that they rather merit the imputation of stupidity than of blasphemy.

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Not only the Abipones, but likewise the Mocobios, Tobas, Yapitalakas, Guaycurus and other equestrian people of Chaco, boast themselves grandsons of the evil spirit, partakers no less of their superstition than of their madness. But how different are the opinions entertained by the southern equestrian tribes, who wander up and down the region of Magellan! They are all acquainted with the devil, whom they call Balichù. They believe that there is an innumerable crowd of demons, the chief of whom they name El El, and all the inferior ones Quezubû. They think, however, every kind of demon hostile and mischievous to the human race, and the origin of all evil, regarding them in consequence with dread and abhorrence. The Puelches, Picunches, or Moluches, are unacquainted even with the name of God. These last ascribe all the good things they either possess or desire to the sun, and to the sun they pray for them. When a priest of our order told them that God, the creator of all things, and amongst the rest of the sun, should be worshipped before the work of his own

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AR P 797

1:Dobrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4

does' skins, which makes the most ridiculous noise you can conceive. To every three or four gourds one of these drums answers. But what offends the ear most is the shouting of the mourners. They modulate their voices, like singers, and make trills and quavers mingled with groans. After chaunting some mournful staves in this manner they all cease at intervals, and, changing their voices from the highest to the lowest key, suddenly utter a very shrill hissing. You would swear that a knife had been laid to their throats. By this sudden howl they signify that they are seized with rage, uttering all sorts of imprecations on the author of the death, whoever he be. Sometimes, intermitting this chaunt, they recite a few verses in a declamatory tone, in which they extol the good qualities and deeds of the deceased, and in a querulous voice endeavour to excite the compassion and vengeance of the survivors. At other times they mingle tears with their wailings, tears extorted not by grief, but by habit, or, perhaps, by exhaustion. Most of them carry about some little gift or remembrance of the deceased, as emu feathers, glass-beads, a knife, or a dagger. I will now describe their method of lamenting by night.

About evening, all the women that are invited